

Chapter 5

Urban Design Guidelines

Background

One of the Northside Village's major concerns has been how to encourage and attract new development and investment, while at the same time, maintaining those characteristics that reinforce and contribute to the "small village" feel of the area. Relative to this issue, the community identified several problems that threaten the preservation of the "small village" character and negatively impact the quality of life in the neighborhood:

■ **Current development is heavily automobile-oriented.** Northside Village is a neighborhood where walking to reach destinations within the community is a way of life. Although the neighborhood has many strong retail and service destination points, these are neither easily visible nor accessible by pedestrians without conflict with automobile traffic into and out of these businesses. The existing character of development in the commercial corridors is largely suburban in nature, typically set back 20 feet or more from the curb, with multiple parking lots. By and large, parking lots are immediately adjacent to the curb. As a result, pedestrians have to cross intense, automobile-traffic zones to get to the businesses.

■ **Street/sidewalk environment along the commercial corridors is not pedestrian friendly.** Disjointed sidewalks, lack of landscaping and pedestrian facilities, numerous curb cuts, often immediately adjacent to each other and inadequate lighting along large areas of the commercial corridors have created a generally unsafe and unfriendly walking environment.

■ **Incompatible land uses threaten the character of the residential neighborhoods.** In many areas of the neighborhood's major corridors, industrial and

commercial uses are located immediately adjacent to established residential areas. Heavy truck traffic often spills over into quiet residential streets creating a noisy environment and unsafe walking conditions. Operation of bars and cantinas also contribute to heavy traffic well into the night.

Only two subdivisions within the neighborhood have deed restrictions. Therefore, the community is concerned about the potential for infill development which may destroy the bungalow home, single-family character of the neighborhood. Of particular concern is the potential for the neighborhood being overtaken by development of large-scale, two or three storied, high-priced townhomes on single lots which are not in keeping with the character of surrounding single-family development.

The "Design Guidelines"

Because current development regulations do not exist which adequately accommodate the pedestrian emphasis and protection of neighborhood character desired by the Northside community, a set of design guidelines for new development and rehabilitation, broadly supported by the community and reflecting the community's vision, are part of this Plan. These guidelines identify development practices through which the neighborhood's goals can be achieved.

To develop the guidelines, several design and development alternatives were presented to the Northside community in workshops, where stakeholders identified the preferred design guideline that best enhanced and reinforced the 'pedestrian feel' of the neighborhood. These principles address many land development issues such as building setback, location of parking lots, design of storefronts, sidewalk treatment, lighting, pedestrian amenities and landscaping, etc. While individually each of these

guidelines can bring about an improvement of present conditions along the corridors, implementing these as a whole will help to realize the community's vision for a pedestrian-oriented Northside Village.

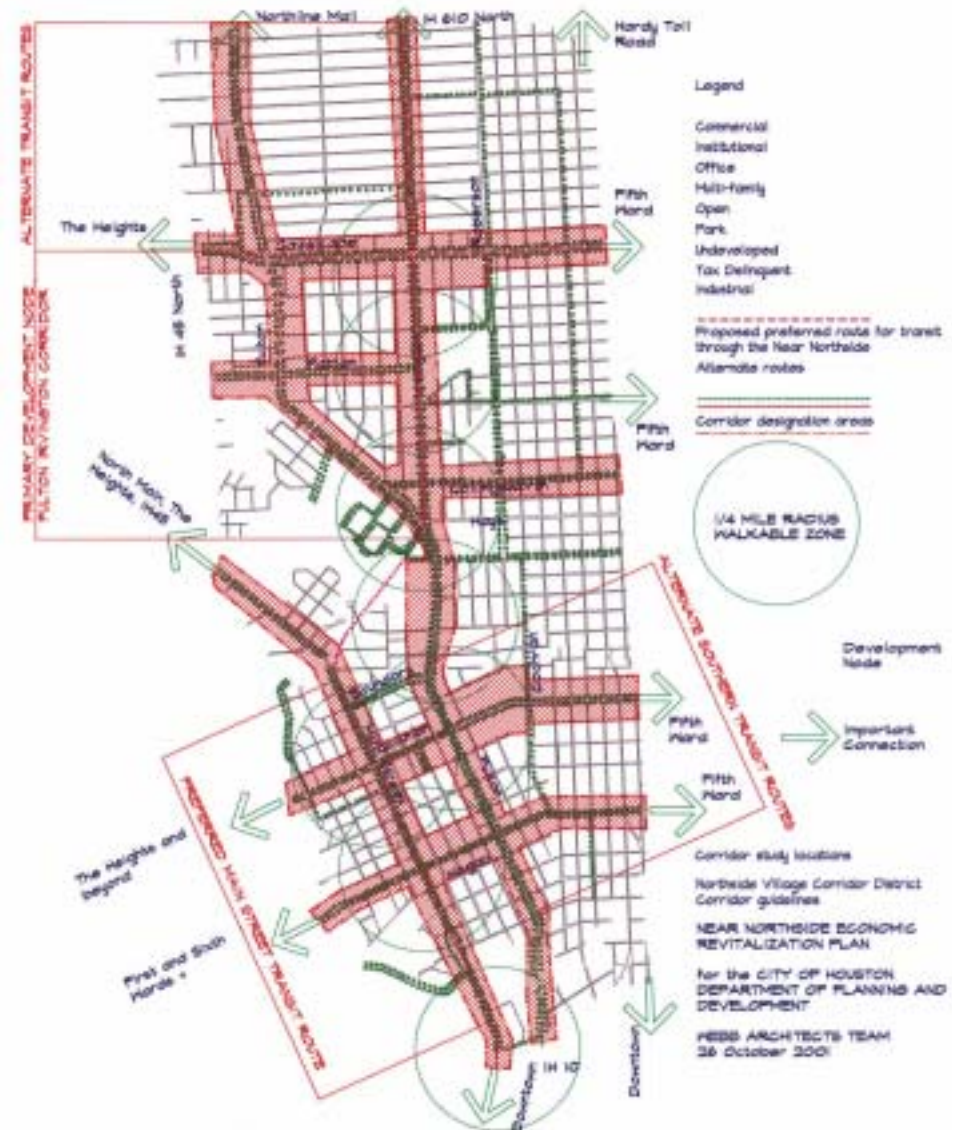
For the residential areas, the consultant team surveyed Northside neighborhoods and identified different types of historic and architectural elements that make the community unique. Based on the community's priorities, these were refined into specific design guidelines for housing.

Two overriding goals which reflect the community's values and their vision form the core of these design guidelines:

- (1) Encourage new, quality urban development along the community's major commercial corridors
- (2) Preserve the residential integrity of the community's numerous neighborhoods

The major themes which are addressed by these guidelines are:

- ✓ Develop pedestrian-friendly corridors; including:
 - Walkable corridors
 - Neighborhood Scale Service and Retail
 - Establishments
 - Linked Activity areas
 - 'Greening of Corridors'
- ✓ Protect Single -family Housing Character
 - Scale
 - Setbacks
 - Design of structure
- ✓ Protect Historic Resources



Corridor District Plan



Residential Area Plan

These features clearly establish the identity of Northside Village as a “Community for Pedestrians”. *Although highest priority was placed on pedestrian access, the community emphasized balancing vehicular needs as well.*

The Guidelines

Section A of this chapter “CORRIDOR DISTRICT PLAN” will focus on design guidelines for creating pedestrian friendly commercial corridors (N. Main, Fulton, Irvington, Quitman and Hogan) in Northside Village. Section B “RESIDENTIAL AREAS PLAN” will focus on design guidelines for preserving the single-family housing character in Northside Village’s unique residential neighborhoods.

SECTION A: CORRIDOR DISTRICT PLAN

Creating Pedestrian friendly Neighborhoods

The community identified key characteristics that would make Northside Village pedestrian friendly – these entail the creation of a safe, secure walking environment with ample neighborhood retail, service and recreational opportunities connected by a network of shaded sidewalks and bike paths. The following design guidelines address the community’s major areas of concern and provide direction for development to help in achieving the community’s vision. The guidelines include the following elements: 1) Parking; 2) Building setbacks; 3) Streetscape elements; and 4) landscaping.

ISSUE 1: PARKING

Parking in Northside Village is generally located in front of businesses and immediately adjacent to the public right-of-way. Typically, each business has its own individual access from the street, parking in the front setback, directly in front of the business and a parking lot that is separated physically from the adjoining business' parking lot. The result is multiple curb cuts in the sidewalk, often very close to each other and in some cases, right next to each other. Consequently, pedestrians face many traffic interruptions and unsafe conditions as they cross the sidewalk while motorists enter and exit the parking areas. In addition, to access adjoining businesses, motorists must drive from one parking lot to the adjoining one. To address this issue, the community supported the following guidelines:

Guideline 1.1

Locate parking towards the side or rear of the development instead of between the sidewalk and the building. Locating parking towards the side or rear of commercial establishments will heighten the attractiveness of the corridor to pedestrians by reducing the visibility of automobiles from the sidewalks. This will reinforce the corridor's identity as a continuous, walkable retail district rather than as a collection of isolated stores and businesses dominated by automobiles and parking lots.

The image on the top right shows typical commercial lot development with individual parking. The image on the bottom right shows the commercial block as a cohesive destination with parking on the side or rear of buildings.

Guideline 1.2

Combine and/or share parking where feasible. Because many of the adjacent land uses along the corridors generate peak vehicular traffic at different times of the day



Proposed development arrangement with parking at rear or side of buildings. and/or have different hours of operation, parking lots and access driveways for each can be combined and shared to reduce the total number of parking spaces needed for their operation. This will not only encourage more efficient use of available resources, but also allow customers to visit several businesses in one trip. Decreasing the need to move one's car when going from one activity point to another will reduce the need for additional curb cuts across the sidewalk, thereby enhancing the corridor's walkability and safety. Combined/shared parking can be achieved by:

- connecting parking lots towards the rear/side of buildings;

- removing or minimizing barriers, such as fences, bollards, or curbs between adjacent parking lots;
- limiting number of curb cuts along sidewalks and providing shared access driveways; and
- providing on-street parking where feasible.

Guideline 1.3

Design parking lots to facilitate pedestrian circulation, safety and create a pedestrian-friendly environment.

Parking lots and their design in the commercial corridors in the Northside neighborhoods are heavily auto-oriented. They prioritize the motorist's convenience and ease of access over pedestrian mobility. However, once motorists park their vehicles at their destinations, they become pedestrians themselves and face the same issues as pedestrians.

Sensitive design of parking lots can go a long way in transforming the corridors from auto-dominated to pedestrian friendly, eliminating the harsh and unsafe walking environment. This can be accomplished by:

- providing clearly marked separate walkways from parking areas to building entrances;
- landscaping interior of parking lots to provide shade and to break up large expanses of asphalt; and
- landscaping perimeter of parking lots to screen cars

ISSUE 2: BUILDING SETBACK

Along the primary commercial corridors in the Northside, buildings are located towards the back of the lots. This puts the pedestrians at a disadvantage, causing them to navigate through parked cars as well as vehicular traffic looking for parking spots to access the stores. In addition to this safety concern, locating buildings away from the sidewalks does not encourage pedestrians to access

businesses, as they have to cover a longer distance from one side of the street to the other. To address this issue, the community supports the following guidelines:

Guideline 2.1

Locate buildings close to the street instead of setting them deep into the lots.

Locating buildings close to the street will help both pedestrians and motorists alike, as the destinations will be clearly visible to both, allowing for easier access and orientation. It also reduces the distance that pedestrians have to travel from the sidewalks to the building entrance. In addition, it will create an uninterrupted 'street wall' of neighborhood businesses along the corridors. This will encourage increased pedestrian traffic,

This image illustrates the scenario with individual parking lots fronting the sidewalk and multiple curb cuts that disrupt the pedestrian experience.



This image shows the buildings fronting the sidewalk, creating a connected path between activities and a minimum number of curb cuts.



as the businesses will be easily accessible through short walking trips along a continuous sidewalk system. This can be accomplished by:

- maintaining 0' to 5' setback for buildings along the corridors;
- locating major building entryways immediately adjacent to the thoroughfare sidewalk; and
- connecting building entrances to sidewalk system.

Guideline 2.2

Develop street intersections as primary activity areas for pedestrians by concentrating neighborhood retail and services at street corners. Commercial corridors running north-south in the Northside neighborhoods generally intersect with secondary corridors running east-west. By concentrating buildings at the major street intersections and setting them adjacent to the sidewalk, the intersection is defined as a focal point along the corridors and as an entryways to the core business area of the neighborhood.

- Locating buildings and accessory uses (such as outdoor cafes) at street intersections
- Discouraging parking lots and service areas at street intersections
- Encouraging 0' to 5' setbacks along the corridors.

ISSUE 3: STREETSCAPE

The pedestrian environment along the commercial corridors is uninviting and somewhat intimidating. This is due in part to the fact that many storefronts/buildings along the corridors in Northside Village have blank facades and the ones with windows often have protective grillwork across them. In addition, the corridors lack pedestrian amenities, such as crosswalks, adequate lighting, landscaping, street furniture, etc. The following design guidelines for streetscape elements



A concentration of activities looking from a residential street and light-rail transit stop towards a corner of the corridor mutually reinforce each other.



around the intersection. The image on the left illustrates the lack of a visual destination for the pedestrian when commercial buildings are not concentrated at the corners. The image on the right shows a concentration at the corners and clearly allows the pedestrian to see the destinations in the commercial corridors.

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will help in creating a safer and friendlier environment for pedestrians.

Guideline 3.1

Promote the use of large windows in structures located along the sidewalk. Storefronts/buildings that are 'transparent' and open out into the public sidewalk network create an environment that is of pedestrian interest along the streets. They generate increased pedestrian activity by encouraging 'window shopping' and create a safer walking environment by allowing 'eyes on the street'. In addition, they also allow easy identification of uses from the sidewalks helping both motorists and pedestrians.

Guideline 3.2

Use pedestrian scale design of streetscape elements such as pavers, lighting, banners, kiosks, signs, awnings and street furniture. Sensitive design of lighting

fixtures, street furniture and awnings of a pedestrian scale can create a very positive and pleasant environment for pedestrians, greatly increasing the comfort of walking and making the area more attractive and appealing. Clearly marked crosswalks, pavers, banners and information kiosks add to safety of the corridor experience by catering to pedestrian needs.

ISSUE 4: 'GREENING' OF THE CORRIDORS

While the residential neighborhoods in Northside Village are well established with mature shady trees lining its quiet streets, the commercial corridors offer a stark contrast with little or no landscaping and very few trees along the sidewalks. The glare from the asphalt in the adjacent parking lots combined with the harsh sun creates a very inhospitable environment for pedestrians. Landscaping along the network of corridors will create a pleasant and attractive environment and make walking or transit viable options for traveling in the Northside.



The image on the left shows the pedestrian experience with parking lots fronting along the sidewalk. The image on the right places activities along the sidewalk and incorporates landscaping, streetscape elements, and storefronts to look at and enter into.





In this photo, the residential area shown as a white block is shielded and separated from adjoining commercial-use parking lot through landscaping and/ or fencing.

Guideline 4.1

Create a landscaped network of sidewalks and bike paths along the corridors connecting neighborhood businesses and community spaces. An interconnected system of shaded sidewalks linking the businesses on the corridors with the residential areas and parks will provide an optimal environment for multiple activities such as shopping, walking, biking and recreation, and generate increased pedestrian traffic in the corridors. This can be created by:

- providing shade-giving trees along sidewalks in the corridors;
- integrating the sidewalk system along the corridors with walking/biking trails in the esplanades in the residential neighborhoods; and
- connecting the linear park system with the sidewalks.

Guideline 4.2

Create a buffer of hedges, shrubs and trees between incompatible uses such as commercial establishments and adjacent residential uses. Effective landscaping can minimize the impact of noise, lighting and traffic from commercial activity on adjacent residential neighborhoods. Adequate buffers that separate commercial activity and their associated parking lots and service areas from the residential neighborhoods can be created by:

- providing landscaping, fences and/or walls to separate residential areas from commercial areas when parking or service is located in the rear of commercial uses;
- shielding adjacent residential neighbors from the impact of site lighting and automobile headlights;
- minimizing intensively illuminated signage that faces residential areas;
- allowing access for servicing of commercial uses along an alley; and
- preventing the fronting of commercial uses along residential street block faces through the creation of covenants, deed restrictions, or district planning approaches.

SECTION B: RESIDENTIAL AREAS PLAN

Preserving Single Family Housing Character

As noted earlier in this Plan, Northside Village has a distinct, small neighborhood character, which the community wishes to preserve. Existing single-family homes and structures, including those that are historic in nature, are the foundation of this area's character. Therefore, these guidelines are intended to help preserve that

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character and as new infill housing occurs, encourage development in a manner that is compatible with neighborhood desires. The guidelines are intended to encourage new development while respecting the unique characteristics of the neighborhood. Compatible new development can strengthen and enhance existing older neighborhoods; new development does not have to dominate, overtake and change the character of the neighborhood. At the same time, these guidelines are applicable to the rehabilitation, additions and external remodeling of existing structures. This will ensure that the character of the area remains intact.

The guidelines are applicable to:

- (1) New, Single-Family Infill Construction
- (2) New, Multi-Family Infill Construction
- (3) Rehabilitation of Existing Buildings
- (4) Additions to Existing Buildings
- (5) Historic Housing

ISSUE 1: NEW, SINGLE-FAMILY INFILL CONSTRUCTION

Modest, low density, single-family structures with brick or wood siding are the dominant form of housing in Northside Village neighborhoods. Maintaining this character has been identified as a priority by the community and can be accomplished by continuing to observe existing neighborhood housing styles including building materials, scale, setback, architectural features and placement of garages.

Guideline 1.1

Housing shall be compatible with surrounding single family structures and ensure the integrity of the neighborhood through:

- attention to shape, size, materials, massing, and set back of new construction;
- placement of garages next to or behind main



Half-width projecting porch with portico



Hipped Roof



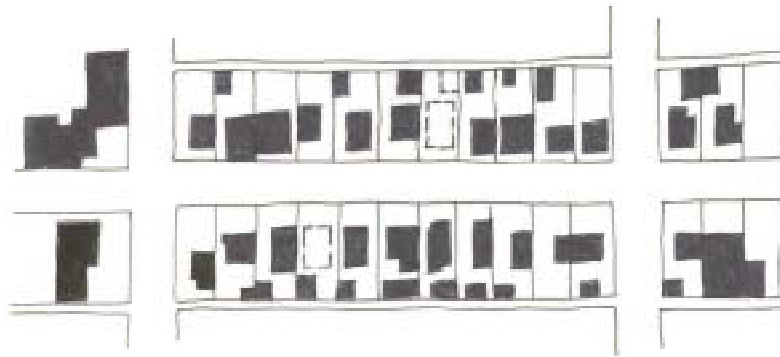
Full-width inset gallery porch



Double gallery porch



Small, recessed porch



Each block has an established relationship of how the buildings relate to the street. Primary structures (houses) are located closer to the street aligned with the predominant setback. Secondary buildings (garages) are located in the rear. Note: garages are located behind houses, dashed lines are infill opportunities.

structure (garages shall not occupy more than 50% of the building façade);

- construction of new structures with a width that is similar to other buildings on the block;
- placement of main entrances to face the street;
- alignment of front façade with other houses on the street; and
- use full or half width porches on new construction (See examples).

Guideline 1.2

The main structure shall reflect block character and be compatible with surrounding housing by:

- maintaining a height and width that is similar to those already established on the block;
- corner building height shall be similar to adjacent and nearby buildings; and
- to the extent possible, using raised pier and beam foundations.

Guideline 1.3

A new building shall reflect the period of the surrounding structures. This can be achieved by:

- avoiding the addition of architectural details from earlier buildings;
- matching roof pitches to the pitches on the block;
- locating garages similarly to those of existing homes;
- placing parking and service facilities in the rear;
- using similar building materials as those used on existing homes in new construction; and
- including porches (if surrounding housing has porches) that reflect existing architectural character.



Existing Corridor: Collingsworth



Collingsworth: Showing Redevelopment Potential

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Guideline 1.4

New housing shall maintain the prevailing single-family home setback distance from the street right-of-way.

- Determine the dominant setback characteristics of the block and duplicate

Guideline 1.5

Secondary Buildings (garages, outbuildings) shall be of smaller scale than the main structure and use the same building materials as on the primary structure.

Guideline 1.6

Maintain neighborhood character by preserving existing tree lines, saving mature trees and shrubs to extent possible particularly along the front of the structure.

ISSUE 2: NEW, MULTI-FAMILY INFILL CONSTRUCTION

Multi-family housing (as defined in this Plan) is a more dense type of housing, with examples ranging from a small duplex or quadruplex building to large apartment or condo buildings.



Opportunity for Multifamily housing, Frawley at Gano, existing chicken plant



Proposed Multifamily housing, Frawley at Gano, existing chicken plant site

Appropriately located, multi-family housing makes a good buffer; for example, a buffer between a commercial area and a single-family residential neighborhood.

Guideline 2.1

Locate large-scale multi-family housing in more urban/commercial type areas.

Guideline 2.2

Place smaller scale duplexes and quadruplexes with sensitivity to existing houses and according to infill design guidelines.

Guideline 2.3

Place new multi-family housing near existing services, such as bus stops, grocery stores, clinics and recreational facilities, and in underutilized commercial areas with easy access to transit.

ISSUE 3: REHABILITATION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS

The Northside Village contains a number of areas that have the potential to be historic districts as well as a number of location specific historic structures. Most of the housing stock consists of modest cottages rather than typically historic, high-style mansions. It is important to respect the historic nature of these homes; as rehabilitation of existing structures occurs, it is important to respect and maintain the historic nature of the neighborhood as it represents the community's past.

Guideline 3.1

Rehabilitation of existing buildings should, to the extent possible, maintain the historic character of the area by:

- Maintaining as much of the original building material and features as possible including:

- √Historic decorative elements
- √Eaves and rafter tails
- √Fish scale shingles
- √Porch columns
- √Porch railings
- Maintaining the rhythm and type of windows
- Repairing rather than replacing elements
- Repairing existing wooden windows whenever possible (wooden windows are well built and if repaired well, can last another 100 years)
- Window replacement when necessary should:
 - √Follow the pattern of the existing windows
 - √Avoid horizontal, commercial, or arched windows
 - √Replicate the original as close as possible

Guideline 4.4

Discourage enclosing the front porch.

Issue 4: ADDITIONS TO EXISTING BUILDINGS

Additions to existing single-family structures will occur more frequently as more families are drawn to the area. To preserve and enhance the existing character of Northside Village neighborhoods, additions should be designed to complement the original structure and neighboring homes as well. This can be accomplished by respecting the building materials, scale, setback and architectural features of the existing structure.

Guideline 4.1

Place new additions in the rear.

Guideline 4.2

Keep additions simple and appropriate in size, shape, materials and detail.

Guideline 4.3

Additions shall not be larger than the primary building.

